

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF REFUGEES IN SERBIA

Improving practice through research

Goals

I Data-driven practice and support adjusted in accordance with beneficiaries' needs

II Continuous tracking of trends, evaluation of support system and providing recommendations for its improvement

III Raising awareness of the hardships refugees are faced with and advocating to establish conditions that will allow refugees to foster and reach their potentials

Activities

Collecting and analyzing data on mental health of refugees

Identifying factors which affect mental health of refugees in Serbia

Keeping track of trends



Methodology



Data collected from January to September 2018

Instruments:

Refugee Health Screener (RHS-15) – assessment of vulnerability, most-common symptomatology, acute distress and coping capacities (additionally HTQ, SDQ, BPRS, DAWBA)

Positive Functioning Proxies – assessment of different aspects of positive psychological functioning and resilience

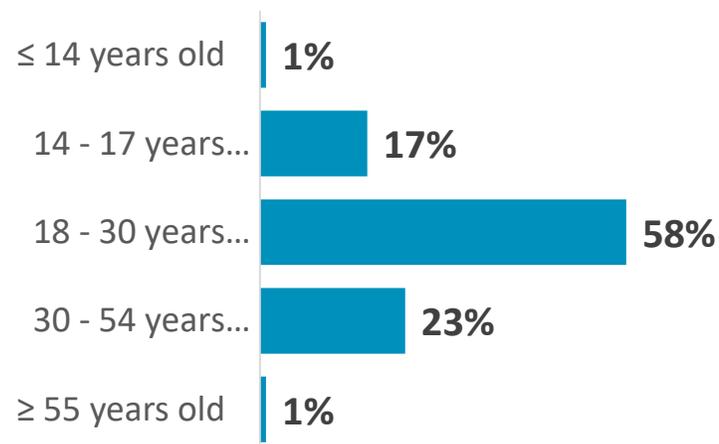
Post-Migration Living Difficulties Questionnaire (PMLDQ) – refugees' subjective evaluation of the hardships they experience in Serbia

Focus groups – predominately focused on better understanding of everyday challenges, integration in local community, as well as availability and usage of different pillars of support and ways of coping with difficulties they are faced with.

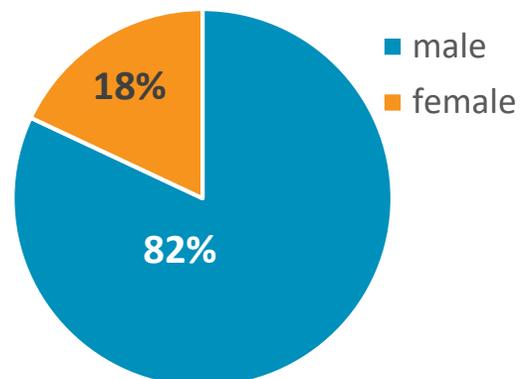
Sample characteristics

Total of **320** refugees participated in different aspects of the research

Age breakdown



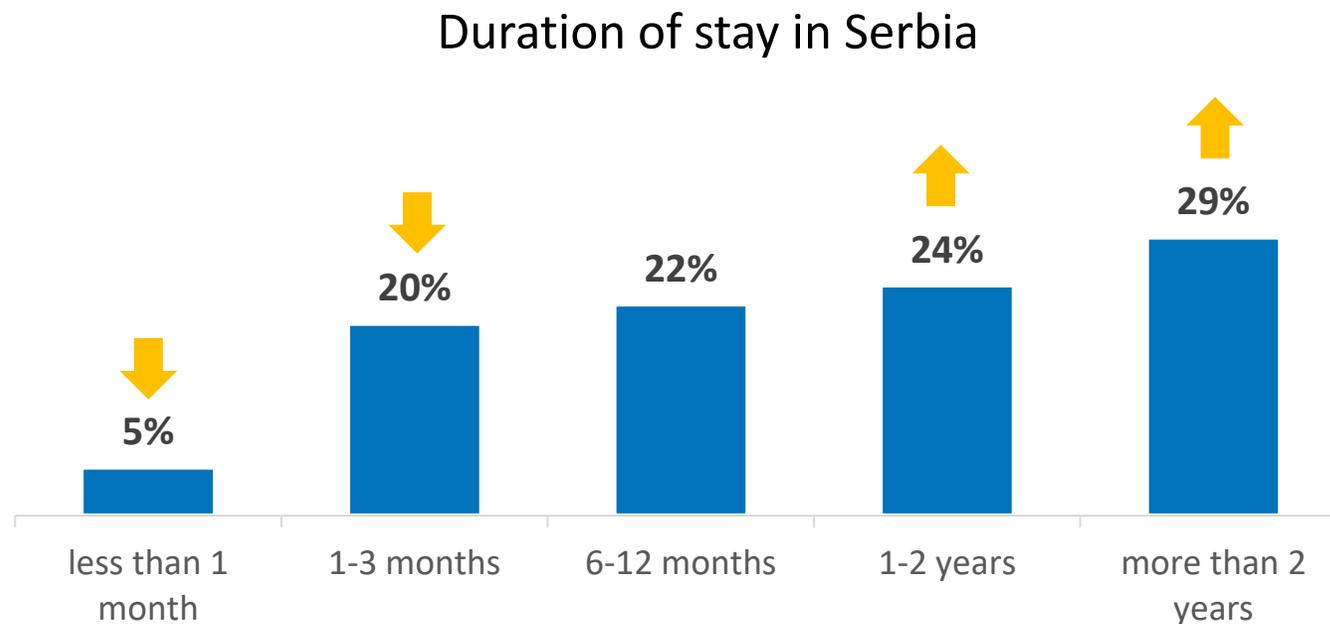
Gender breakdown



Breakdown by country of origin

Afghanistan (42%), Iran (33%), Pakistan (17%), Iraq, Cuba, Syria, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Ghana, Nepal, Bangladesh...

Sample characteristics



86% left one or more family members in the country of origin, while **4%** were separated from family member during flight.

52% are alone in Serbia (without family members or close friends).

Traumatic experiences

I On average, refugees have survived **13** traumatic experiences in country of origin, while **80%** experienced six or more.

II Additionally, during flight they have, on average, survived **10** traumatic events, somewhat less than **3%** have experienced none, while more than **90%** have survived four or more.

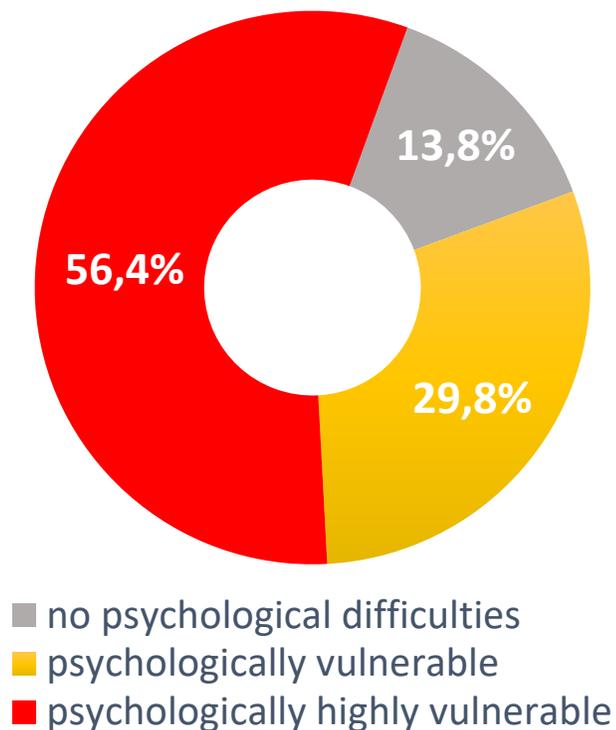
III Trend of decreasing number of traumatic experiences in country of origin and increasing number of traumatic experiences during flight or in country of temporary residence.

**Data from 2017.*



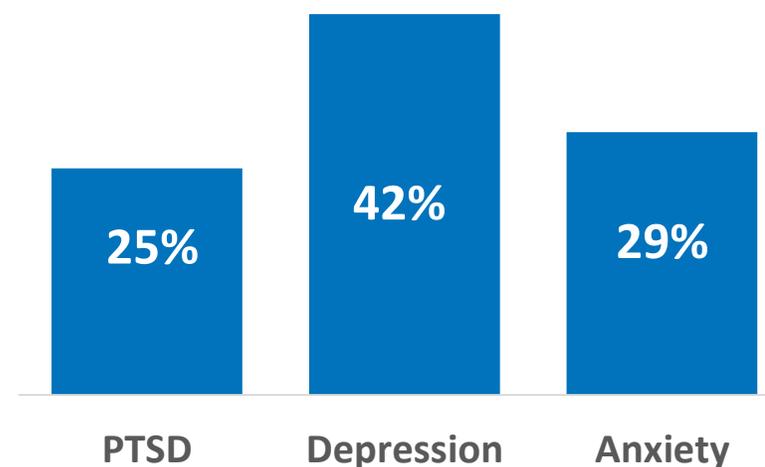
Mental health

psychological vulnerability and symptomatology



86% of refugees are psychologically vulnerable

73% experience acute psychological distress



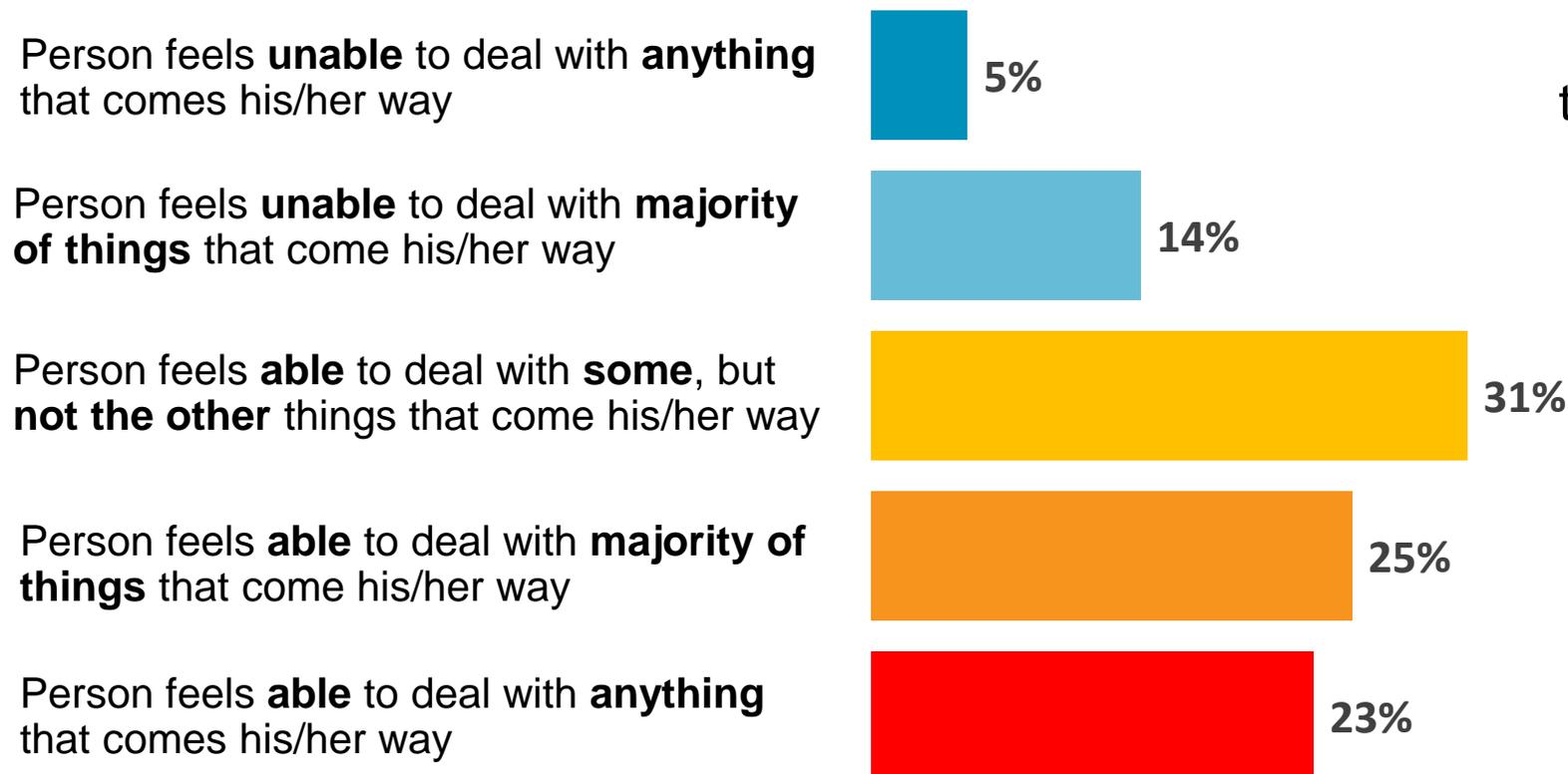
Mental Health

psychological difficulties



- cannot stop thinking – thoughts are always swirling in their head (**70%**)
- most of the time feeling sad, gloomy, blue (**53%**), helpless (**51%**) or emotional emptiness or numbness (**37%**)
- not being able to stay calm or stay still (**56.0%**), nervousness and shakiness inside (**39%**)
- intrusive memories of the trauma or a feeling of reliving the trauma (**37%**)
- pronounced physical reactions (sweating, quick heart rate) when faced with or thinking about certain aspects of the trauma (**38%**)

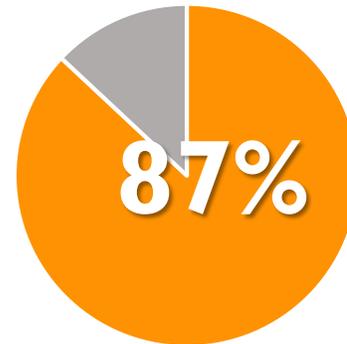
Coping capacities



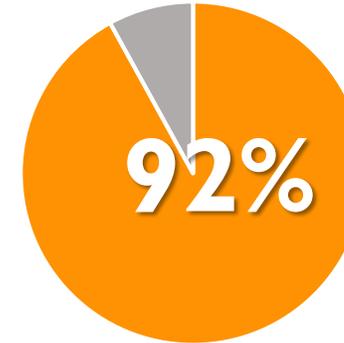
48% of refugees believe that they have the capacity to deal with the obstacles and problems they face.

Resilience

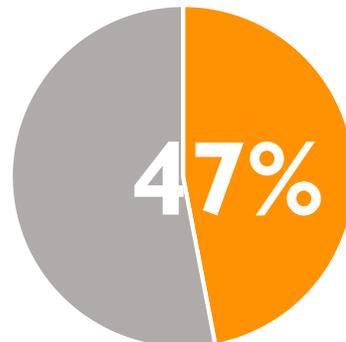
I am optimistic about the future



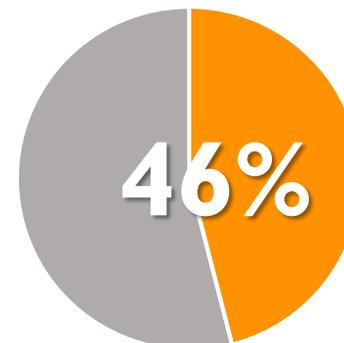
I believe that I have the capacity to achieve great things in life



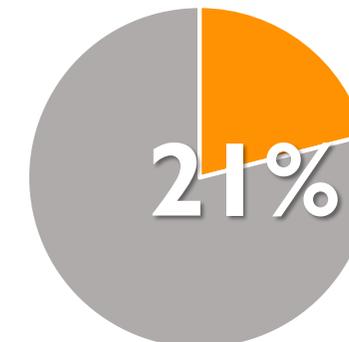
All in all, I see myself as a happy and content person



I am satisfied with what I have achieved so far in my life



I am content with my life, and I would not change many things



Difficulties during stay in Serbia

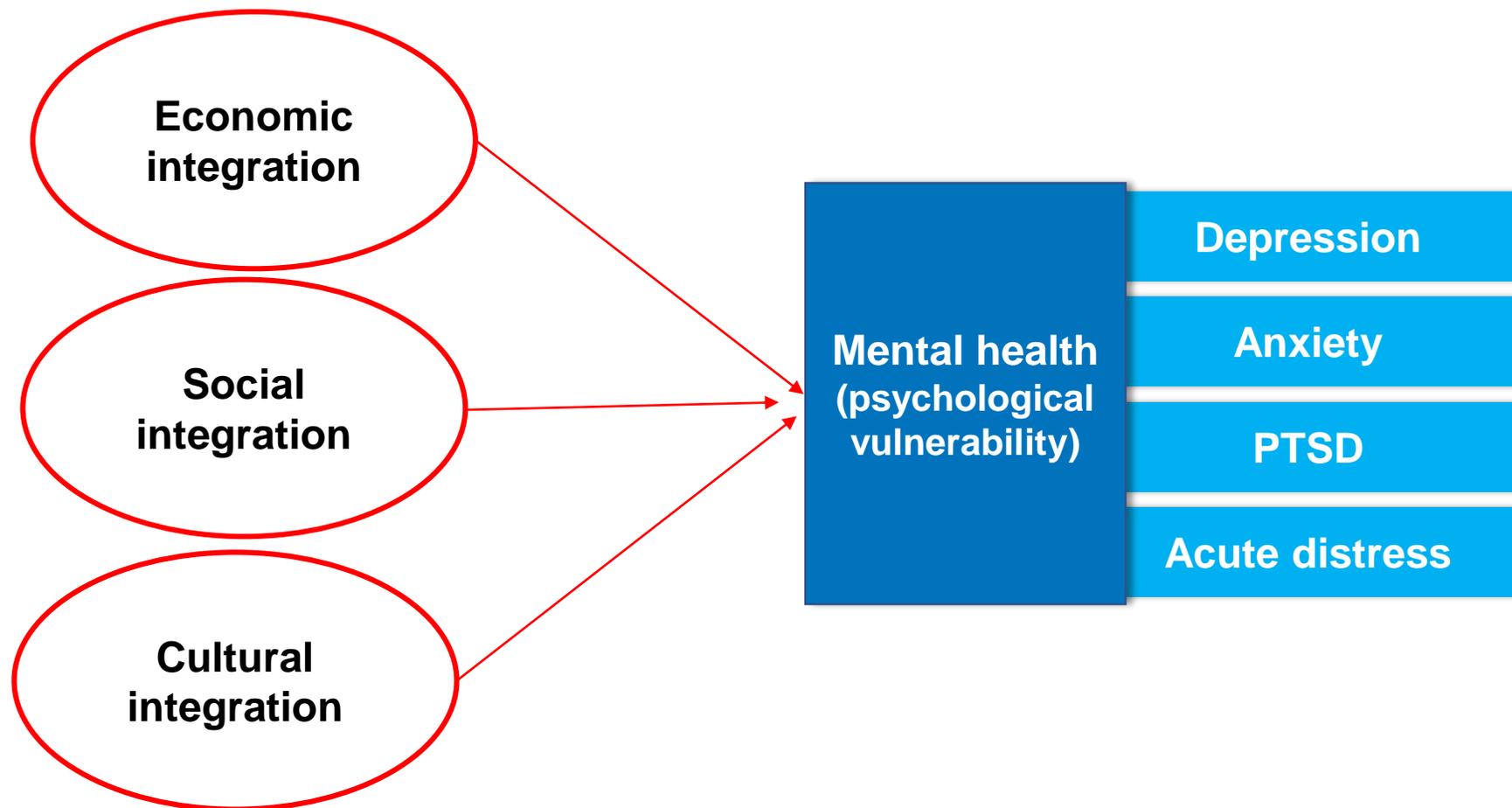
During your stay in Serbia, were you bothered by...

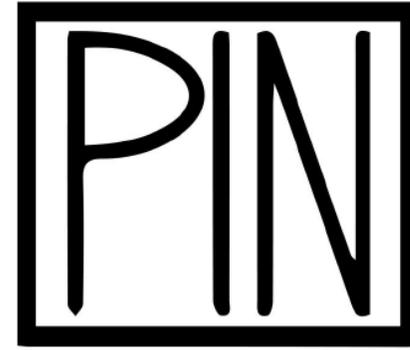
Poverty	88.1%	
Poor access to the foods you like	83.5%	↑
Little government help with welfare	79.5%	↑
Worries about family back home	78.4%	
Isolation	73.8%	↑
Loneliness and boredom	72.3%	↑
Not having permission to work	72.6%	
Separation from family	71.6%	
Communication difficulties	71.0%	
Not being able to find a job / get employed	70.6%	↑

Difficulties during stay in Serbia

Worries about not getting treatment for health problems	70.3%	↑
Little help with welfare from Charities	70.0%	↑
Fears of being sent home/ deported	65.6%	
Being unable to return home in case of emergency	64.2%	
Delays in processing application	60.2%	↑
Poor access to long term medical care	57.6%	↑
Poor access to emergency medical care	56.5%	↑
Poor access to counseling services	49.8%	
Discrimination	36.6%	
Interviews with police	13.1%	↓

Factors relevant for mental health





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